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Parks and Recreation Minutes 12/04/2004

Park and Recreation Commission Minutes

Tuesday, December 14, 2004 - 7:00 p.m.

APPROVED - Meeting Minutes

The meeting came to order at 7:00 PM.

Commissioners Present: Joseph Carabello, Thomas Caccavaro, Nancy Campbell, Leslie Mayer, and Don Vitters (arrived at 7:15 pm)

Staff: Jonathan Jalbert, Superintendent of Recreation

Heather Hogle, Recreation Program Coordinator

Recording Secretary: Laura Munsey

Others: Alex Hoffinger, Friends of Waldo

1. Welcome and Approval of Minutes

Mr. Carabello welcomed the Commissioners and Guests to the December 14th meeting. Mr. Jalbert introduced Heather Hogle to the Commission and welcomed her to the Recreation Staff. Minutes of the November 9th meeting were distributed and will be voted on at the January 11th meeting.

MOTION: (Made by Thomas Caccavaro, 2nd by Nancy Campbell)

The Park and Recreation Commission approve the October 12th minutes as amended.

Vote: Unanimous (4-0 in favor of the motion, Mr. Vitters not present for vote)

2. Little League Buck Field Lighting Proposal

Mr. Caccavaro reported that a public meeting was held to discuss the proposed lighting of Buck Field. Mr. Caccavaro represented the Park and Recreation Commission, and 9 Board Members from Little League were present. No members of the public attended the hearing. After 45 minutes the hearing was adjourned.

MOTION (made by Thomas Caccavaro, 2nd by Joseph Carabello)

Following the Public Hearing, the Park and Recreation Commission supports the proposal presented by Arlington Little League to install lights at Buck Field.

VOTE: (Unanimous – 5-0 in favor of the motion)

3. Capital Project Updates

Spy Pond Shores: Mr. Vitters reported that the work at Spy Pond Shores is 1/3 complete. The work is going very well and Mr. Vitters stated he is very impressed with Heimlich and he has found them cooperative and responsive. The contractor plans to work throughout the winter, however at a slower pace. They are working on the wall and the stone pathway. Drainage is pretty

well complete. Site meetings will now be held monthly on the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

Per the request of the Town Manager, Mr. Jalbert will now be the authorizing authority to sign off on all invoices to the Contractors. Mr. Jalbert will also be the Project Manager assigned to all Park Projects. Final Requisitions for Payment will now come to the Commission for Approval, as will any change orders. The contractor submitted a request to Mr. Vitters asking that members of the public not be present at the site meetings due to liability concerns. Mr. Vitters agrees with this recommendation, and suggested that members of the public can be invited for a walkthrough with Mr. Jalbert and Mr. Vitters prior to the site meeting with the Contractor. Mr. Jalbert will relay any questions or concerns from the public to the Contractor.

Nancy Campbell inquired what prompted this change in policy, regarding all the commissioners approving invoices. Mr. Caccavaro stated that it is the Park Commission's responsibility to oversee the construction projects at Arlington's Parks, and each member should be aware of and approve any funds dispersed for Park Projects. Mr. Vitters stated that it is common practice to give approval/authorization, as well as having a town employee sign off as the final authority. Mr. Jalbert stated that it is the Town Manager's request to have a town employee sign off, after approval from the Architect, and the Commission.

A few concerns regarding the boat ramp were discussed. Pouring of the concrete should not affect the overall project and adjustments in the plan will be made to correct this error. The Contractor took pictures of the entire process, took many samples, and has kept good documentation. Quality Assurance tests on the concrete are currently being conducted, and results of the air entrainment test and 28-day hardness tests should be available shortly.

Another concern surfaced regarding the grooves in the boat ramp. The plans call for deep straight cuts, however a rounded tool was used on the grooves. The grooves are required for Traction Purposes. This situation should not impact the project, but further evaluation will be required. The Contractor will grind down an area and check the edge for quality comparison of the straight edge vs. the rounded edge. This is not recommended until the 28-day test results come back.

Mr. Vitters informed the Commission that 2 or 3 trees that are between the parking lot and the wall and are in bad shape must come out. DPW has agreed to replace the trees. Mr. Vitters will check with the Tree Warden and the Conservation Commission prior to removal.

Mr. Vitters asked if there are no objections, the color of the benches and trash receptacles will be dark green and in similar style to those placed at Robbins Farm. The Friends committee expressed their desire to donate a memorial bench that will be placed at a spot by Linwood Street. This donation will allow the Commission to delete one ornamental bench for a cost savings to the overall project.

Robbins Farm: No Action - All work waiting until Spring. Concerns have been raised regarding who is responsible for the cracks in the slide.

Crosby, Locke and Waldo: Mr. Carabello reported he met with the Town Manager regarding funding for these projects. No commitment has been made regarding any leftover CDBG funds from previous Crosby and Peirce projects – although there is a preference to reallocate the funding within the same area of town as the original projects. Another meeting is suggested with Mr. Carabello and Kevin O'Brien to see if any funds can be allocated to the Crosby Tennis Courts. Mr. Carabello requested that Mr. Vitters attend that meeting. Mr. Caccavaro further suggested that Mr. Jalbert also be included in this meeting if he is now the Project Manager.

Mr. Vitters distributed a memorandum to the Commissioners detailing possible cuts in the design plans for all current park projects. Mr. Hoffinger also reported that neighbors support the changes. With the recommended cuts, the projected difference in funding needed for Waldo is approximately a \$50,000 to \$75,000 gap, a significant improvement from the original \$200,000 gap. The difference in funding needed for Locke is \$50,000 to \$75,000. It was reported that Mr. Lionnetta believes only \$25,000 additional funding may be possible for Locke. The funding shortfall for Crosby may be improved if previous Crosby funds can be allocated to this project.

4. Committee Updates

Field Users Committee. No action – Meeting will be held in January.

Sports Center Improvement Committee. No Action - Pending Rink Lease Resolution.

Open Space Committee. Ms. Mayer reported the Open Space Committee is concerned with the changes planned at the Vista Park at the Symmes Site. The commitment was made for a 1-acre park and the new plan provides for a diminished amount (approx. ½-acre) of usable land. The Public Use Working Group of the Symmes Advisory Committee had discussions regarding possible trails in the wooded area at the Symmes site, however the Developer currently does not recall those discussions. There has been a suggestion to put water way maintenance money in the budget for next year. This would be a proactive step to help regularly maintain all of Arlington's water ways in the areas of weeds and invasive growth. The Open Space Committee also reported that the Cemetery is running out of room and that the Cemetery Commission is exploring options.

Ms. Mayer distributed copies of the previous Vision 20/20 survey results regarding open space and recreational needs.

FOCCA. Mr. Jalbert and Ms. Mayer received estimates from Theresa DeBenedictis for fencing at Thorndike Field for a proposed Dog Park and this information was distributed. 4' Galvanized Fencing would cost \$6,350. 4' Black Vinyl fencing would cost \$6,800. Mr. Carabello reported that Mr. Lionnetta did not believe any money from the 1998 Thorndike Field Project could be used for the purpose of a dog park because it is out of the scope of the original intent for use. Ms. Mayer will inform the FOCCA people that the private funding will be needed. Mr. Carabello also indicated that the Town Manager had inquired about the project. His response to the manager was distributed. A meeting with the manager had been previously discussed and may need to be scheduled. Ms. Mayer distributed potential rules and regulations for a dog park that were drafted by FOCCA.

It was reported that some youth sports organizations have already expressed concern over a dog park at Thorndike Field. Parking was raised as a major concern. Mr. Caccavarro also reported that he has heard concerns from neighbors.

Mr. Carabello suggested other possible sites be looked at including the flat area in the wooded section of Hills Hill. Ms. Mayer thought that this suggestion has potential but reported that FOCCA does not believe that a single large area is realistic and that this would encourage driving and related parking issues.

MOTION (made by Leslie Mayer, 2nd by Nancy Campbell)

THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION SHALL SCHEDULE AND HOLD A PUBLIC HEARING IN JANUARY REGARDING CONSTRUCTION OF A DOG PARK AT THORNDIKE FIELD.

VOTE: 3-2 in favor of the motion.

Leslie Mayer, Nancy Campbell, and Don Vitters in the affirmative

Thomas Caccavarro and Joseph Carabello in the negative

At the request of the Commission, Mr. Jalbert will schedule a public hearing in January.

5. Recreation/Rink Updates.

Mr. Jalbert provided the field permit fee report from 2001 to present to the Commission. Requests for payments due will be sent out this week, with a deadline of January 31 for receipt. No permits will be issued to user groups who owe balances.

Mr. Jalbert provided the Commission with the 2004 Reservoir Beach Report, Financial and Fee Records, as well as the Aquatics Director's annual report. Numbers have been declining for many years and potential reasons will be evaluated. Ms. Campbell inquired if this year's decrease is due to the increased fees. Ms. Mayer stated that she has heard some complaints about the fee increase. Mr. Jalbert did not believe this was the case. Mr. Jalbert and Mr. Carabello stated that weather conditions and the late opening also might have affected the 2004 numbers. In an effort to showcase the Reservoir an open house was held this year as recommended by the Reservoir Committee. Current goose control measures have been successful, however there may be an ongoing misperception by the public regarding water cleanliness due to previous goose related issues that have been resolved.

Mr. Jalbert provided the commission with a program comparison report, which covers the summer enrollment numbers from 1999 to present. Some programs have increased numbers of participants, and some have decreased. Mr. Jalbert is evaluating the

possibility of offering one-week sessions next year to assist families by being more flexible. Ms. Heather Hogle is in the process of preparing a Program Fee Comparison Report, which includes 10 surrounding communities. Preliminary results show Arlington charges the 2nd lowest fee structure based on hourly rates than surrounding communities who provide Recreational Programs. When all the information is complete and evaluated she will provide the Commissioners with a summary of the results. Mr. Carabello requested that she also obtain the enrollment numbers. Mr. Jalbert stated that it was reported at the recent Massachusetts Recreation and Parks Association Conference that many communities are dealing with declining numbers.

The winter brochure has been distributed and registration has begun. Arlington High School and Arlington Catholic have started painting their logos in the lobby of the Rink. The Rink's Maintenance Craftsman has returned to work after an extended medical leave, and the staff is very pleased to have him back. The Arlington Hockey Club held its annual Jamboree this past weekend.

Mr. Jalbert reported it was well organized, well attended, and many volunteers worked to make it a very successful event. Mr. Jalbert stated that his staff, Mr. Arthur Ales, and the Board did a wonderful job and should be commended. Mr. Jalbert stated there continues to be parking issues at large events. An evaluation of Concession stand finances has been conducted and it is currently running at a profit. The busy time of the season has just kicked into gear with the start of High School Hockey. Mr. Carabello thanked Mr. Jalbert and his staff for assisting in the Flu Clinic that was held at the Rink on Monday December 13th. He stated it went smoothly and they appreciated the efforts were extended.

Mr. Jalbert met with Rob Addleson and Ruth Lewis regarding any Volunteer Credits earned and several options are being reviewed, including the Recreation Department reimbursing for banquet expenses or having the Groups rent the ice privately and receive all the proceeds from the scheduled fundraising events directly. Mr. Jalbert also met with both Athletic Directors, and the President of the Arlington Youth Hockey and Figure Skating Club and all agreed to be the liaisons to Mr. Jalbert on all fundraising issues, and each will be responsible for organizing their events, as well as for providing all the volunteers required.

Mr. Jalbert once again addressed the Commission with the request that any concerns regarding Recreation or Rink be brought directly to his attention. Mr. Carabello again addressed the commissioners to go directly or speak with the Superintendent regarding any issues or concerns.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:45 pm